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FM AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE
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C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT AU PRINCE 000570

NOFORN

DEPT FOR C-CHERYL MILLS
ALSO FOR WHA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/15/2019

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SUBJECT: SENIOR CABINET MEMBER OFFERS SUPPORT TO PRIME
MINISTER AS SHE CONSIDERS OPTIONS

REF: PORT AU PRINCE 554

Classified By: Ambassador Janet A. Sanderson, reason 1.4(b) and (d).

¶1. (C) On Saturday, I again talked to Prime Minister Michele Pierre-Louis about her proposed resignation. While insisting that she will not go back on her decision, MPL acknowledged that she is "thinking very hard ... I don't want to make a mistake." She reiterated these comments in a subsequent email and telcon. For our part, I said that we were reluctant to see her go, and I again urged her to consider carefully her options. I repeated my concern about the impact such a decision would have on Haiti at a time when it needed strong, consistent and engaged leadership. She repeated that she is fully cognizant of the effect that this will have on the Haitian political process. Nonetheless, she said, the situation is difficult and she does not believe that she has much choice if she cannot be credible Prime Minister to her people. She again asked that this information be close hold.

¶2. (C) I shared with MPL a conversation I had had with Minister of Plan Jean-Max Bellerive the previous evening. Bellerive, a senior Cabinet member and one of those, allegedly, in the line up to replace MPL if she leaves, expressed grave concern about the growing pressure on the Prime Minister and repeatedly expressed his support for her. Without prompting, he described the Cabinet meeting in which Preval dumped on the PM's northern development plan, terming the session "embarrassing." That being said, he observed that under MPL's leadership the GOH has become more focused and better organized. She is, he contends, making ministries more accountable, although he admitted there was long way to go. The important thing, he said, about the now-infamous Cabinet meeting is that the Ministers, as a united front, stood up to the president. This was, Bellerive contends, the first time that had happened in Haitian political history. Pierre-Louis has been good for Haiti, Bellerive claimed, and she had a lot of clout behind her in the Cabinet if she wished to use it.

¶3. (C) MPL was clearly surprised by Bellerive's comments. She said that she would take them under advisement but appreciated knowing that there were those in the Cabinet who supported her. In a Sunday evening conversation, she said that she is not prepared to act on her resignation immediately but she refused again to rule it out down the road. She promised to keep in close touch with the Embassy as she goes through this process.

¶4. (C) Comment. MPL remains angry and frustrated by her inability to take control of her government. I believe that she wants to resign and I know that her relationship with the president remains fraught. However, she has agreed to take her time and consider her options; a proposed trip to Miami later in the week to address chambers of commerce and the Haitian Diaspora may allow her to put some distance between her and the stresses of Haitian politics. We will keep working Pierre-Louis quietly on our end; given her tenuous relationship with the president at this time, it would serve neither one of their interests for this matter to become

public.

SANDERSON